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U.S. Navy Photo by MC2 Michael Ehrlich

NPS Students Receive Public Policy Insight as Rep. Panetta Returns to Campus

By MC2 Michael Ehrlich

Rep. Jimmy Panetta of California's 20th Congressional District delivered his second guest lecture to NPS students offering his insight into how public policy is made while visiting the Graduate School of Business and Public Policy (GSBPP) in Ingersoll Hall, Feb. 22. The visit marked Panetta's second year in a row speaking to the business school allowing students to ask questions and receive his unique perspective on working in Congress.

Coordinating Panetta's visit was Associate Professor of Economics and Finance Ryan Sullivan. He said that having Panetta share his insights with the NPS student body is a rare and important opportunity.

"The ability for the students to ask questions openly to an elected member of Congress allowed them to better grasp the processes involved in resource allocation and the making of public policy at the legislative level," said Sullivan.

Panetta discussed how policy is formulated and implemented in Washington and stressed the importance of reaching across the aisle to solve problems in his district as well as the country as a whole.

Panetta reflected on the first major legislation he encountered in the U.S. Congress which was the effort to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Panetta said he joined a group called the Problem Solvers Caucus that was working to solve ACA issues. The group helped Panetta understand the bill and helped him differentiate between the evidence and substance of the bill from the emotions and slogans attached to the bill.

“What I saw with the Problem Solvers Caucus was people sitting together at the table talking about how we can fix the ACA, rolling up our sleeves and trying to fix the policy,” said Panetta. “I learned a lot more about the ACA from my time with the Problem Solvers than I did in any other caucus in Washington. Democrats and republicans were actually agreeing on some issues and agreeing to work together to fix this thing.”

“Having someone relate personal experiences in government is the perfect supplement to classroom learning,” said Sullivan. “Guest lecture opportunities like this one really illustrates to the students the principles and topics we discuss in the classroom, which in turn elevates their education.”

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